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AN
IDYL OF THE SOUTH.

WHITMAN.



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BY
ALBURY A. WHITMAN

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AND

FREEDOM'S MAGNITUDE.

PREFACE.



In "An Idyl of the South" I have aimed to tell the story of an Octoroon.

Her life discloses a type.

My readers will form their own conclusions of the sociological conditions suggested by the narrative. It were better to think over some things in silence than to discuss them openly.

The story is true to the life. It strikes at the root of certain conditions which have been thrust upon us by the humiliating consequences of Slavery.

Some complications in the social order, obtaining in the development of the South before the War, are exceedingly interesting from our present viewpoint, instructed as we are by the larger observations and experiences of a more enlightened civilization.

I hope to deal with certain new phases of the subject in a work which is to follow this volume.

The eventualities of Emancipation and Reconstruction are upon us for consideration, and some deep and grave matters cannot be thrust aside as trivial things.

The reckoning must come.

No nation can ever rise above the level of its virtues.

Love is always an interesting subject. Love is the only Redeemer of intelligent being. Love, not Law, must regulate the movements of all bodies in the moral universe.

The story of the Octoroon will have much to do with this sweet and potential influence.

We shall find that love does not always exist between equals only, but from the very beginning this chubby autocrat of the affections has audaciously presented the "Sons of God" to the "daughters of men." And history is radiant with the fact that absolute Power has often shared the throne with the helpless divinity which we call woman.

The story of the Octoroon will also show that true love is ever exalted by the very helplessness of the object of its regard; yet it will not act under a base license, lest it be consumed.

Under the established orders and customs of society, marriage is not always possible, not always proper or permissible. What is even more, society may condemn, and the law may positively prohibit marriage between different peoples, but, wherever wedlock is not possible, true love is an absolute barrier to any degradation of the sexes.

This is the strong point brought out in the story of the Octoroon.

Divine Love Himself stooped to the sweet helplessness that washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the locks which adorned her shoulders.

If woman would learn a secret greatly to her advantage, let her study this lesson; and if man would redeem the world and conquer it unto himself, let him convince woman that her very dependence upon him makes her to need no

other protection than his love for her and his faith in her, which render it impossible to doubt her purity.

The story of the Octoroon will show these things.

The story is written in verse because verse seems better suited to the subject, and it is easier for me to express my fancies in "regular numbers."

To me the South is all a great poem. What bard of hers will ever write for us a pastoral of ante-bellum days; or the tragedy of the Civil War, with its climax of the dying Confederacy; and Grant and Lee at Appomatox, with the crowning sorrow of Lincoln's assassination? Who will give us the epic of Emancipation, the farce-comedy of Reconstruction, the romance of Agriculture, or the hymn of her prosperity?

Who will sing the "New Song" of the South?

With all her antecedents of slavery and all the darker shadings of the "Race Problem," I love the South. My people should not speak ill of our home-land, because we have had to suffer wrongs and hardships here. Would we not have had such sufferings elsewhere? May we not look for triumphs here? May we not be nearing the borders of our desert-journey?

A race which has given the world so much of its cheerfulness, and made it so much better by its songs and its prayers, should not despair in a land where the magnolia and the cape jassemine reach the perfection of flower and perfume, and the mocking-bird, wild and free, sings through all the year.

ALBÉRY A. WHITMAN.

PART I.

THE OCTOROON

AN IDYL OF THE SOUTH

PART I.

THE OCTOROON.

STANZA I.

Hail ! land of the palmetto and the pine,
From Blue Ridge Mountain down to Mexic's sea ;
Sweet with magnolia and cape jessamine,
And thrilled with song,—thou art the land for me !
I envy not the proud old Florentine
The classic beauties of his Italy ;
Give me but here to have my glory dream,
'Mid fragrant woods and fields—by lake and stream.

2

Come with me then,—who have your leisure hours—

Where mem'ry's path divides a fragrant shade ;

Here on the lap of old Acadian bowers,

Come, rest you where no vulgar sounds invade.

Come, for the air is fresh with sparkling showers,

And dark with curtains, of magnolia made ;

So from life's care awhile come sit apart,

And listen to a story of the heart.

3

I shall not sing to you a sounding lay

Of gods contending till the lurid air

Is hoarse with the loud fury of their fray ;

Shall not recite the lofty deeds and rare,—

The glories which attend the heroes' way ;

But I shall lead you where the walks are fair ;

Where tufts of shade, and now and then a song,

Wait to delight us as we pass along.

4

The truthful story which I here relate,
Must run on like the prattling of a rill;
On heights of pleasure we shall sometimes wait,
Through winding vales shall loiter, if we will;
And we shall find that not among the great,
An Eden may the lover's dream fulfil;
But lowly walks the fairest ends may bring,—
A lovely slave may even charm a king.

5

'Mong hills of sturdy oak, my native land,
Where roll the waters of the Tennessee,
And palmy groves on Tampa's sea-washed strand,
Are shrines of love forever dear to me.
And where the old Acadian mansions stand
Mid strange lagoons and by the dark Swanee,
I knew a creole, tall and lustrous-eyed;
And in my heart I hold her still with pride.

6

There, in the shadow of the cypress wood,
Where brooding Silence showed its thankful face;
Where moss-draped trees like Druids praying stood;
I've seen this idol of a gentle race,
When, like a spirit of the Solitude,
A paragon of Southern pride and grace,
She there inhaled the breath of fragrant bowers—
The sweet extravagance of shrubs and flowers.

7

When joyous as a brook that in its flow
Descants of promise in a hopeful lay,
Which ever leads the hearing soul to know
That bliss awaits us in a coming day.
I've watched her, where the minstrel warblers go
Among dark boughs, all undisturbed and gay,
When floods of song their brilliant joys revealed,
And felt that beauty to their hearts appealed.

8

And I must tell you of this Octoroon,

 This blue-eyed slave, what sounds like a romance:

Her master was a fair young man, and soon

 The proudest soul that Love, in seeming chance,
Had led beneath the full round Southern moon,

 To coax sweet eyes to give him glance for glance;
And with her happy speech and sparkling wit
His fair slave charmed his soul—and captured it.

9

A lithe and shapely beauty; like a deer,

 She looked in wistfulness, and from you went;
With silken shyness shrank as if in fear,

 And kept the distance of the innocent.
But, when alone, she bolder would appear;

 Then all her being into song was sent,
To bound in cascades—ripple, swirl and gleam,
A headlong torrent in a crystal stream.

IO

Her name was Lena. She was but a child
In all save beauty ; but she was a slave.
In far Unyoro's wastes, Obokko's wild,
Or by the blue N'yanza's boatless wave,
Where hearts by worldly greed were undefiled,
'Mid Afric's groves some sweet ancestress gave
The strain of life which now still rushed along,
To warm her soul and break in tides of song.

II

White wonder of creation, in our clime,
'Mid vistas cool and in the dark recess,
She mused where Nature wrought the true sublime,
And wove a habit for wild loveliness.
There where, like sentinels at the gates of Time,
Old live-oaks stood in grim and sober dress;
She learned the stately mien and charming speech,
Which only our old Southland's scenes could teach.

12

Where Meditation found a leafy shrine,
And Vision wandered in a waste of bloom,
She touched her lips to Fancy's ruddy wine,
And knew the bliss of Pleasure's rare perfume.
Where zephyrs round her like sweet nuns did pine,
Who whispered prayers in some old cloister's gloom;
Superb in form, divinely sweet in face
She grew—the charm of her delightful race.

13

With her young master she had strolled the green
When Heaven was in a shining overflow;
Had watched the stars the sleepy boughs between,
When winds crept by, almost afraid to blow.
But not as wooers had they thus been seen,—
Not as mere lovers at the trysting,—no!
The gentle slave no friend had ever known
But her proud master, and she was all his own.

14

He was of manly beauty—brave and fair;

There was the Norman iron in his blood.

There was the Saxon in his sunny hair

That waved and tossed in an abandoned flood;

But Norman strength rose in his shoulders square;

And so, as manfully erect he stood,

Norse gods might read the likeness of their race.

In his proud bearing and patrician face.

15

A slave she was, but beatiful and dear!

Her ancestors had ridden with Hamilcar,

With heads of kings swung to their horses' gear,

Upon the one hand; while at Trafalgar,

When England's fleets made trembling Europe hear,

And flung the borders of her reign afar,

They, on the other had with Nelson stood—

Who, then, we ask, could boast of prouder blood?

16

No Cleopatra nor Semeramis;

No jewelled favorite of a Persian throne,
Could ever have the lily soul of this

Young slave, who through the old South walked alone,
'Mid fields of waving grain, and knew the bliss

Of wading where the clover was full blown;
And listening to the music of the boughs,
While on the meads she heard the lowing cows.

17

Slaves have been many—Roman, Persian, Greek,

And harem beauties—Indian, Hindoo, Turk,
With eyes whose luring depths could softly speak,
Of souls wherein consuming passions lurk;

With shapely forms, on soft divans antique;

Where lace clouds hung in dreams of handiwork;
Sweet sounds Eolian through soft labyrinths crept;
And fragrance breathed where dainty zephyrs slept.

18

These creatures of the languid Orient,—
Rare pearls of caste, in their voluptuous swoon
And gilded ease, by Eunuchs watched and pent,
And doomed to hear the lute's perpetual tune,
Were passion's toys—to lust an ornament;
But not such was our thrush-voiced Octoroon,—
The Southland beauty who was wont to hear
Faith's tender secrets whispered in her ear.

19

“An honest man's the noblest work of”—No!
That threadbare old mistake I'll not repeat.
A lovely woman—do you not think so?—
Is God's best work. That she is man's helpmeet,
The Bible says, and I will let it go;
And yet she crowns and makes his life complete.
Who would not shrive himself in her dear face,
And find his sinless Heaven in her embrace!

20

Young Maury loved his slave—she was his own;
A gift, for all he questioned, from the skies.
No other fortune had he ever known,
Like that which sparkled in her wild blue eyes.
Her seal-brown locks and cheeks like roses blown,
Were wealth to him that e'en the gods might prize.
And when her slender waist to him he drew,
The sum of every earthly bliss he knew.

21

They had grown up together,—he and she—
A world unto themselves. All else was bare,—
A desert to them and an unknown sea.
Their lives were like the birds' lives—free and fair,
And flowed together like a melody.
They could not live apart, Ah! silly pair!
But since she was his slave, what need to say,
A swarm of troubles soon beset their way?

22

Just in the dawn of blushing womanhood;
Her swan-neck glimpsed through shocks of wavy hair;
A hint of olives in her gentle blood,
Suggesting passion in a rosy lair;
This shapely Venus of the cabins stood,
In all but birth a princess, tall and fair;
And is it any wonder that this brave
And proud young master came to love his slave?

23

He was a handsome and a noble fellow,—
Her master was, and now the hour was late.
The moonlight in the mulberry leaves was mellow,
Or rather, silvery soft, and seemed to wait;—
The moon had smiled when he began to tell,—oh,
Well, I might, perhaps, as well not state
What this young Saxon told his Octoroon,
When they were looking at the happy moon.

24

The dark shades round with fire-fly swarms were blinking,
And in the stillness of the mulberry tree
There was suggestion,—to my way of thinking
The trees may listen and the stars can see,—
The leaves had breath, the stars were through them winking,
And shadows seemed to veiled spectators be;
When Lena, looking in her master's face,
With sinless trust leant in his strong embrace.

25

O'er her white brow the wistful moonbeams stole,
And, tangled in her tresses, seemed detained;
But soon, like fleeting fancies in the soul,
Were gone;—ah! could they only have remained.
And when night's minstrel bird began to troll,
And pour her song in torrents forth untrained,
To rill through boughs and float along the skies,
The slave girl sighed and raised her wondering eyes.

26

And Maury clasped her, waving like a spray;
 He stroked her locks; he tossed them—let them fall;
And saw the scattered moonbeams flash away,
 Like silver arrows from a golden wall.
And there were whispers then like elves at play,
 And through the leaves the winds began to crawl;
When Lena listening, heard her heart's quick beat,
And startled, thought she heard approaching feet.

27

And am I doing violence to taste,
 Or pride, or honor? Call it what ye will.
What of it? Why let beauty run to waste,
 And hateful weeds Love's blissful Eden fill?
Or, why should manhood suffer heartless caste,
 To rob the bosom of its passion-thrill?
Young Maury loved his slave, and he was free
From meddling tongues beneath the mulberry tree.

28

If it be shame to love a pretty woman,
Then shameful loving is a pretty thing.
And of all things the most divinely human
Is this:—Love purifies life's Fountain Spring;
And he who has not quaffed that fount is no man—
I'd rather be a lover than a king.
And then, preach as we will or may, we'll find
That Cupid, dear young god, is sometimes blind.

29

Fair Dixie Land, thy sons of old were brave,
And earth proclaims thy daughters passing fair;
Thy blood and ancient prestige I would save,
Since time atones, and kindly bids me spare;
But why despise a daughter, though a slave,
Who was as taintless as the mountain air?
Why shun her, as a Magdalene within
Thy gates, when beauty was her only sin?

30

As homeward with his maid young Maury went,
His father shortly met him in the way,
And asked abruptly—what such conduct meant;
But would not hear what Sheldon had to say.
His heart was fixed and on prompt action bent;
He threatened in his ire to bring dismay
To son and slave—“to drive from home the pair”;
But Sheldon smiled to see him “beat the air.”

31

Love will not work by diagram or chart;
Will not be schooled by old Sobriety,—
Can not be reckoned as a “polite art;”
Nor as a child of “good society”—
Not wholly so,—love rules or wrecks the heart.
Now Sheldon’s father preached propriety;
For he was old enough to do such preaching,
But Sheldon was too young to heed the teaching.

32

Fair Morn's descent upon the ocean shore
 To sprinkle rock and wave with pulverin
Of mystic gold; the sound of breakers o'er
 The lone beach piling; the adjacent din
Of woods; the storm's cry and increasing roar
 Of distant thunders, move the soul within;
But lovely woman beats earth, sky and ocean
In stirring manly souls with deep emotion.

33

And Maury could no more prevent his heart
 From feeling than he could the tide prevent,
When Lena from her soul a song would start;
 Or round him like an angel, brightly went.
The fine suggestions which he saw in art,
 In her were strong with all that living meant.
And so his heart ran wild, and, without thought
Of consequences, in him now had wrought.

34

Infatuation. But it would not do.

“A shame!” his father cried, and then looked grave.

“The girl was good and pretty, that he knew;

But Sheldon must remember—was his slave.”

Into a rage, the young man straightway flew;

Against “Society” began to rave;

Withdrew and walked alone or stood morose,

As if the world for him held only foes.

35

Refusing food, he scarcely spoke a word,

But he would talk with Lena when he could;

And from his room upstairs, he seldom stirred.

“The truth was clear,” his mother understood.

“My boy will lose his mind,” she oft was heard

To whisper. “Nay, don’t cross him in his mood.”

And then she’d say to Lena: “You may go

And tell your dear young master” so and so.

36

And Lena went,—to his dear arms she flew.

A gust of joy,—a thousand nothings said;

Heard all he told her,—told him all she knew,

And like a burst of sunshine round him played.

Ah! she was helpless, but her heart was true;

And woman's heart when true, with earth arrayed

Against her, conquers all, and ever will.

The gods are with a loving woman still.

37

Thus runs the story of an Indian bride:

'Mid virgin woods along the rolling James,

A sweet young savage spies a white man tied,—

Ah! sneer not now, sophisticated dames!

Loves him at sight and, flying to his side,

Her only plea, a woman's love proclaims.

And Powhattan,—for what else could he do?—

Accepts her plea, and loves the captive, too.

38

Joy now finds wings,—the news spreads far and wide,
And festal wood-fires stream through spectral boughs;
For Pocahontas is a white man's bride,—
A virgin savage hears the white man's vows.
She is to be his wife, his country's pride,
Her people's cause his country shall espouse;
And while the winding James shall roll along,
The forest glades repeat her bridal song.

39

How weirdly grand the tale has seemed to me,
Of Pocahontas and her lover, who
Perhaps sat on the trunk of some old tree
And watched the evening star go blazing through
Dark tops beyond, and saw, as lovers see,
A nascent moon unrobing to the view;
While, as they watched, he told her how the night
Is earth's great shadow following its flight.

40

He may have told her how that shining star
Goes round and round forever and forever;
And that it is so far off—O, so far!
A bird could fly and reach it never, never.
Or told her what new moons, what full moons are,
And found himself repaid for his endeavor
When he looked in his dusky pupil's eyes,
Aglow with love and sparkling with surprise.

41

Perhaps he spoke of lands beyond the sea;
Of cities and great "wigwams" built of stone;
With walls as high as any forest tree;—
Said she one day should such a wigwam own.
And then, I ween, she nestled lovingly,
And felt his arm around her gently thrown;
And from that hour, true love has kept her shrines
Beneath the old Virginia oaks and pines.

42

Now Lena was the child of teeming farms;
The squaw-girl was a native of the wild.
The one was rich with thought's distinctive charms,—
The other simply Nature's untaught child.
The one held faith clasped in her glowing arms;
The other held a stranger's hand and smiled.
And Lena's cheeks with health's proud rose were tinted,
While in the squaw-girl's ne'er a rose was hinted.

43

Great Randolph, genius of the acrid tongue,
Eccentric, proud, whose words in high debate,
Were wasps of fire that scorched and hit and stung
When he that hawk-voice pitched to irritate,
And haughty challenges were lightly flung;
The hounds and Negroes on his vast estate,
Fared better than the noble Senators,
Who dared to meet him in polemic wars!

44

And Randolph claimed that blue blood—bluest blue—
And blood of Pocahontas in his veins
Their torrents wildly clashed and mingling threw.
And so, he stood aloof in pride's domains,
While love of country,—only love he knew,—
Was all that gave his life those nobler strains
Which charmed his great compeers,—their country's pride—
Made them his friends, and drew them to his side.

45

The "Sage of Ashland"—earth's unrivalled Clay,
Lashed by his wit and withered by his scorn,
Sought the ignoble "code" to wipe away
The biting insult, and though mighty-born,—
The Cicero of his historic day—
His life was thus of highest glory shorn,
Till kindlier age to him had reconciled
The proud descendant of Powhattan's child.

46

But to our story let us now return:

Young Maury grew more moody every day,
And his proud mother thought she could discern
His mind "beginning, plainly, to give way."
But "Wait," his father urged; "I'll have him learn
That I can check him in his childish play.
I'll sell the girl and straightway let her go;
But till she's gone, I will not let him know."

47

"My way is clear. The affair I'll thus arrange:
I'll carry Lena with me up to town
Upon a visit.—This will not seem strange,—
And thence I'll hire Hanks to take her down
To Major Royall's. Then my son may change
His course or stop. And when he has outgrown
The whims and foibles of a vapid mind,
He'll laugh to think he once was color blind."

48

The mother shook her head and sadly smiled;
And said, "I have not anything to say."
But vowed: "I never will be reconciled,
Will not agree to send the girl away.
She is my slave and nothing but a child;
And she has done no crime; say what we may."
And as she spoke, the mists came in her eyes
Like hints of rain which fill blue summer skies.

49

"My boy," said she, "I know has but one thought:
"And that is to befriend a helpless girl.
And did he not do so, he surely ought.
She is as brightly pure as any pearl
Wave-hued, from deepest caves of ocean brought;
And Sheldon Maury is nor knave nor churl!"
And brighter sparks from flint were never dashed,
Than now from this proud lady's blue eyes flashed.

50

But—love his slave! Could such, a proud man do?
Should this with shame not hang a Maury's head?
Nay, loving arms which Lena fondly threw
Around her master's neck, while her eyes plead
With tender flame, moved him, and rightly, too.
For, did not Persia's Monarch love a maid
Who was a slave in Shushan,—crown her queen,—
The meek ancestress of the Nazarene?

51

And Moses, great law lord of Mount Sinai;
Found in a desert path of Midian
A dark-eyed Shepherdess, lute-voiced and shy,
With Jethro's flocks, her cheeks were olive tan,
Tinged by the glare of an Egyptian sky,—
And claimed her for his bride, far worthier than
The titled beauties of the Memphian court,
Who led imperial rakes in royal sport.

52

And 'mong the flowers in Bethel's corners hid,
A sweet-faced mourner gleaned the scanty grain;
When lordly Boaz, noting what she did,
Called to the young men in his harvest train,
And, pointing, said: "To touch her I forbid."
But drop for her some handful from the wain."
"Yea," cried the reapers, and were singing heard;—
But Boaz, he hung back to speak a word.

53

The flower of Moab, blushing at his feet
Among the sheaves, was sweet to look upon.
She sat and sang, and filled her lap with wheat;
She sang of Israel. The harvest sun
Was in her face, but once she glanced to meet
The eyes of Boaz and the work was done;
Her soul was in her lovely eyes disclosed,
And Boaz faced his sunrise,—he proposed!

54

How sweet to think that, if the golden grains
Of life's imperial harvests never fall
Upon our threshing floors, there still remains
A sheaf for gleaners,—that we, after all,
May follow, and behind the reapers' wains,
Take up love's scattered handfuls, though but small.
That Fortunatus, where he passes through,
Must still leave work for loving hands to do.

55

Before the world, I hold that none of these:
The Shushan slave, the Oreb shepherdess,
Nor Moab's gleaner, ever had the ease
Of carriage, grace of speech, the stateliness
Of step and pose, nor had the art to please
And charm with symphonies of form and dress,
Nor had such wond'rous eyes, such lovely mouth,
As had this blue-eyed daughter of the South!

56

Had priest or prophet ever heard her singing,
Or seen her, where the clover was in bloom,
Wading knee-deep, while larks were upward springing,
And winds could scarcely breathe for want of room—
Thus seen her from the dappled hillsides bringing
The cows home, in the sunset's golden gloom,
Our good old Bible would have had much more
Of love and romance mixed with sacred lore.

57

What man is there who would not dare defend
A life like this? Is doing so a sin?
Or who should blush to be known as her friend?
White wonder of creation, fashioned in
The moulds of loveliness; kings might contend
On martial fields a prize like her to win,
And yet, the cabin's hate and mansion's scorn,—
She suffered both, betwixt them being born.

58

The mating bird upon the freest wing
That ever cleft the woodland's joy-tuned air,
Should not be freer for her mate to sing,
Than woman should be, on her bosom fair—
Devotion's home, to press love's offering;
To pillow manly faith and shrine him there.
Thus pure and free, love born of God is real,
Is soul companioning its best ideal.

59

When genial Spring first hears the mating thrush,
Where waters gossip and the wild flowers throng,
Love rears her altar in the leafy bush,
And Nature chants the sweetest bridal-song.
When love is free, with madness in its rush,
Its very strength defends the heart from wrong.
Love, when untutored, walks a harmless way,
With feet, though bare, that never go astray.

60

The hedges may obscure the sweetest bloom,—
 The orphan of the waste,—the lowly flower;
While in the garden, faint for want of room,
 The splendid failure pines within her bower.
There is a wide republic of perfume,
 In which the nameless waifs of sun and shower,
That scatter wildly through the fields and woods,
Make the divineness of the solitudes.

61

But marriage is Love's Heaven, none the less;
 And ceremony is a happy thing.
And beautiful are all the offices
 Of our religion. When fair virgins sing,
The organ peals, and symphonies of dress
 And flowers before the altar stir,—which Spring
Has been despoiled of bloom to decorate,—
Then marriage truly 's a divine estate!

62

That is, if love be in it. If the heart
That throbs and trusts beneath its clouds of lace,
Be innocent of the dissembler's art,
If there be inwardness in Love's embrace;
If on Life's voyage true lovers make the start,
And each soul's compass is the other's face;
Then there's a Wedding, that sweet union made,
Which "none may sunder," as it hath been said.

63

But music, lace and flowers, with altar, priest
And prayers, have never made a wedding,—nay,
Nor ever will! I would not say the least
Against religion,—would not break away
From her restraints; nor have doubt in my breast
That there is good which comes to those who pray;
But it hath been since earth first saw the sun,—
No power but love can ever make twain one.

64

O, Earth, Sea, Stars and boundless realms of air!

What were ye all had not dear woman come
To make man put on clothes and trim his hair.

The wide world would have been without a home
In all its shades, and thistles of despair

Would have sprung up where naked feet must roam!
But woman came, thank Heaven!—Earth's noblest creature;
And woman's love lights every human feature.

65

O Love! thou sweetest influence of the soul,—

First-born of Heaven and earth,—thou all-divine,
I bless, I worship thee! Thou dost control

All thrones of Light,—all realms of song and shine;
And shouldst thou empty forth and send thy whole

Bright colonies from those high worlds of thine,
They all could not eclipse one loving woman,
In frailty so delightful, since so human.

66

At early morn the old plantation stirred,
And toil went humming in its usual way,
While heart-born shouts in all directions heard,
Were earnest signals of a busy day.
Then Maury's father with a friend conferred;
And calling up a house boy, turned to say,
With nimble speech and glibbest unconcern:
"Bring out the wagon. Quick! Let's see you turn."

67

The patient blacks,—those children of the sun,
Were singing; in the distance you could hear
Their song-bursts as if angels had begun
To fill the clouds; now sang they loud and clear,
And now the low refrain would break and run
Beneath the deep'ning shadows far and near,
Throughout the cypress groves along the shore,
Where aspect weird the Southern landscape bore.

68

Ribbons of sunshine long and delicate,
 Were spun out through the mosses on the trees;
And in the depths a spirit seemed to wait;
 A breath of awe hung on the lazy breeze;
And as the wagon left the mansion gate
 At speed, a deep suspense the girl's heart seized;
But there was naught explained, though much was said,
That round the truth through hidden meanings led.

69

Oh, Innocence, and must it ever be
 That violence for thee in wait shall lie?
Since beauty is a snare, a net to thee,
 Spread for thy feet, an exile must she die,
Whose crime is love? Oh, hath not Charity
 A plea for her that will be heard on high?
Nay, Lena must depart, and can not know
What fate compels, nor why she thus must go.

70

The wagon reached the town. Hanks was on hand,—

He always was on hand when deeds like this
Were to be done. He had at his command,

The roads that to the mountains led, and his
Proud boast was that he “could at all times land

His expeditions, and not go amiss,”
And, it must be confessed by all, that he
Made good his boast, and never lost a fee.

71

Toward distant hills now Hanks was soon away

With Lena; still she knew not where she went.
Her surly escort had no word to say;

But kept his ugly eyes before him bent,
While glances from their depths of cruel gray,

Such chills of fear through Lena's being sent
That she dared not risk one inquiring look;
But feigned good heart, though she with terror shook.

72

She even strove to force a pleasant smile,
When Hanks once turned to touch her bloodless cheeks.
As rough as sea foam though his face the while,
The poor girl thought that she could see faint streaks
Of kindness showing from beneath the pile
Of human rubbish which this fact bespeaks;
The light of soul in woman's eyes expressed
Will conquer man,—will brutal force arrest.

73

In striving to be gallant, Hanks was coarse;
He moved his hands as "Bruin" moves his feet,
His whispers low but made his words more hoarse,
As waves sound harsher that in dark caves beat.
So burly an excrescence of uncouth force,
He still had heart, and Lena's accents sweet
Had touched him. She was gentle, proud, but pretty;
And admiration stilled the voice of pity.

74

I've read of Daniel being with lions penned;
And I have heard the legend of a cage
Of wild beasts that would not a virgin rend,
Who was cast in; but, in this prosy age,
When wealth replaces angels as man's friend,
When gods and miracles have quit the stage,
It should be treasured in undying song,
That Hanks said: "Lena, you've been treated wrong."

75

And then he heid and stroked her trembling hand,
And patted it, upon his rugged knee.
The hours went by till Night had waved her wand
Of darkness o'er the world, and rock and tree
In darker forms, like giants, rose to stand
Along their way; but Lena's heart beat free;
And nestling near her keeper, kind but coarse,
She felt no terrors from whatever source.

76

But times were stormy on the old plantation.
 Ill news on eager wings had spread uproar:
The Negroes raised a mighty lamentation,
 And went about the outrage to deplore.
“Lena was sold!” Ah! now was tribulation,
 And Grief began a rain of tears to pour.
The master watched the storm that he had made;
But trusted that it soon would be allayed.

77

The old men muttered prayers and went about,
 Or stood dejected, heeding naught, nor speaking.
Old women sobbed and moaned and then shrieked out,—
 Outspoken anguish kept their hearts from breaking.
But braver spirits here and there would shout
 Their imprecations upon “all de sneaking
Ole niggah buyers dis side ob de Devil!”
But strange to say, poor souls, they spoke no evil

78

Of their "ole Massa," who had made the sale.

Well, such is life. We oft lose sight of cause,
And o'er effect set up a noisy wail;

Too oft oppose the gathering stream by laws;
When at the source wise actions should prevail.

But Lena's master made of proud stuff was;
He vowed—the act if wrong, was his own doing,—
His way was his, and of his own pursuing.

79

And night came on. Earth-jarring thunders roared

And rolled afar. Behind the inky banks
The sun had sunk in terror. Up, up soared

The scurrying clouds and spread like serried ranks
With murky banners flying,—swirled and poured

Through lurid arches,—while demoniac pranks
The vivid lightnings cut and onward came,
Stabbing the darkness with their spears of flame.

80

Young Maury's horse was saddled at the gate.

In vain the Negro servants with him plead;
His father called to him in vain to wait.

He waved all back and sternly shook his head.

“This night be the black herald of the fate

Which waits him who opposes me,” he said;

“And but for age and blood, my sire, I'd wreak
Swift vengeance on your head—but you are weak.”

81

With tears, his mother stayed him in the door;

He kissed her, passed, and at a single bound,
Into his saddle sprang. “By Heaven,” he swore,

“I'll bring her back!” and wheeling short around,

His roweled heels against his horse he bore,

That forward sprang, and, flying, spurned the ground.

And through the dark, these words, impassioned, clear,

“I'll bring her back,” fell on the listener's ear.

82

And on, right onward toward the hills he shot;
 On, on, and on; till, miles and miles away,
He drew his reins upon an abrupt spot,
 Where rocks and fallen trees around him lay;
And o'er him rose a cliff,—an inky blot
 On outer darkness; when he heard the play
Of angry waters seething far below;
And, scorning danger, could no farther go.

83

He could not see ahead; would not retreat;
 But gave his horse the reins and gently urged.
The horse reached down and smelt about his feet;
 Snorted and wheeled and like a tempest surged.
But Maury grasped the reins and held his seat,
 Until his curb-defying horse had forged
And plunged off in the darkness. Then a crash
Of thunder seemed the mountain tops to slash

84

Away, and pile the tumbling cliffs around.

The distant peaks in startled haste replied,
And peaks more distant still took up the sound;
Till darkness hushed,—in awful stillness sighed,
And throbs of terror shook the trembling ground.

“Hold on thar, stranger,” now a cotter cried;
Who in his doorway heard the horse dash by.
And Maury turned to see whence came the cry,

85

And to his joy he found an open door.

For man and beast the cotter soon found rest,—
And then he took his baby from the floor,
And tossed him high and held him on his breast.
And said: “Now, stranger, we be mighty poor;
But you are welcome to our little nest;”
And then there was no heed to outside din,—
For only peace and sunshine reigned within.

86

The baby pulled his father's beard till drops
 Stood in his eyes as big as morning dew.
The father tossed him almost to the tops
 Of the low rafters,—still the baby crew.
“Pull, pull,” the mother cried, “till papa stops.”
 And while their guest looked on, they never knew
That in his heart a wilder tempest beat
Than that which shook the mountain in its seat.

87

The morning came with not a cloud in view,
 And Maury was again upon his way.
The birds were everywhere in brilliant hue,
 And thrilled the forests through the livelong day.
With hours of vain pursuit he weary grew,
 To chagrin and conflicting fears a prey.
But Hanks with Lena, as the sun went down,
Had reached the outskirts of a country town.

88

They saw few people on the one quaint street
That straggled through the town from side to side;
And idlers lounged on here and there a seat,—
A bench or box,—and the new-comers eyed.
But soon they yawned and struggled to their feet,
And round the buggy stretched their necks and pryed.
But Lena turned away her modest face,
And drooping eyes,—a blushing rose of grace.

89

“I know,” one drawled, while all the others gaped;
“I’ll bet a shuck that she’s that feller’s bride!”
Then he looked wise and all the others aped
His stupid looks and fell back satisfied.
But Lena through a gateway had escaped,
With Hanks in rugged chagrin at her side,—
And thence he up the graveled driveway led,
Where dark magnolias round their curtains spread.

90

An old slave in his doorway bowing stood,
A statue of the meek in ebony;
And at his side, an image of the good,
His dark old wife was peering out to see;
And when the strangers paused as if they would
Her cabin enter, struck with awe was she.
While her old partner, raising both hands, cried:
“Good Lawdy Massa! who’s dat at yo’ side?”

91

“Jes’ look, ole ’oman, dats er ainjul sho’.”
“Young Missus, whar’d you come from? From de skies?
Hit pears to me I’ze seen dat face befo’.
God bress dat lubly mouf and dem sweet eyes!
An’ would you stop here at de ole man’s doah?”
And thus in his delight, mixed with surprise,
This sable patriarch of slavery days,
Would have expressed his uncouth, heartfelt praise,

92

Embarrassing with exclamations strange
And interjections meek, his gentle guest;
But Hanks withdrew his feelings from the range
Of these sweet motives in the old man's breast;
And spurning e'en a kind word to exchange,
The old spouse in the doorway thus addressed:
“This here's your master's niggah house-gal, aunty;
She'll stop till after supper in your shanty.”

93

“‘Er niggah house-gal!’ Wuz dat whut he said?”
The old man seemed to ask with wondering eyes;
And then he paused and slowly shook his head,
And muttered: “You’s done took me by surprise,
You sho iz, Massa; fur if I didn’t dead
Sho think she wuz er lady! But I tries”—
Hanks kicked a dog that came about his legs; turned
And blurted out: “Why don’t you keep these durned,”—

94

But now the dog's howls drowned the voice of Hanks;
And Lena, frightened, sprang in at the door;
When swarms of pickaninnies, breaking ranks,
Round cabins flew. "Get supper; say no more,"
Hanks thundered. "Thank you, Massa! Thank you! Thanks!
Obejunce to you; shorely, to be shore!"
The old slave cried: "De supper shall be got;
Be soonly, 'Liza, an' put on de pot."

95

Hanks "knew his route;" he had brought slaves before,
To Major Royall; so, to him he went,
Delivered him the message which he bore,
And got his fee and a fine compliment.
For Major Royall was "delighted more
Than tongue could tell;" since he had long been bent
On "owning that tall girl with big blue eyes,
Whom Maury's people seemed so much to prize."

96

Then Lena threw herself across the bed,
And vainly sought to find her needed rest.
She heard all that the good old people said,
And like a shadow hope went from her breast.
She heard, but, sadly moaning, shook her head,
And to her throbbing heart her clasped hands pressed.
And while the dead walls drank her bitter sighs,
The streams of anguish rolled down from her eyes.

97

But I shall not tell how she wept all night,
How grief no respite found in raining tears,
How, in the morn, the master passed in sight,
With surly looks that filled her soul with fears;
How her old friends had prayed in mournful plight,
And whispered words of comfort in her ears;
Nor how the pickaninnies hung about,
Their big white eyes with wonder bulging out.

98

I shall not say how long and late she heard
 A fiddle snoring an old cabin tune;
A banjo's "plunk, plunk, plunk," unskilled and weird;
 And thumping heels that shuffled off "Zip Coon;"
But night crept by and tardy morn appeared,
 A brilliant dawning in a Southern June.
And that were better, for I could not bear
To tell of Lena's grief,—nor you to hear.

99

But day went by and on came sable eve,
 With hints of slumber in her tranquil eyes.
And at her loom the sunset sat to weave
 Gay edgings for the curtains of the skies.
And Lena's heart almost forgot to grieve,
 As smiling Hesperus was seen to rise
Through woody tops—magnolias dark and pines—
And lead night's hosts from utmost Heaven's confines.

100

But in the shadows there was mystery—
 A breath of mischief, and impending harm;
A whisper and an air of secrecy;
 A sense of fear that hung about the farm;
A presence which one felt but could not see,
 That startled Lena,—filled her with alarm;
And when she thought of home so far away,
Her poor heart sank,—she could not even pray.

101

Word from the “great house” came—a master’s call—
 He wanted Lena, and she must obey.
“He wanted to talk with her,—that was all,”
 The old slave said, and meekly led the way
Through wide grounds, up great steps and through a hall
 To where the master’s wont was most to stay
At night; a room with sideboard, cups and—well
You know the rest, and so I need not tell.

102

He filled a glass, held it before his eyes,
Then drank, and handed his old slave a drink;
Who took the glass and bowed beseechingly,
But durst not once of a refusal think.
But Lena did refuse, and with a sigh
Which showed her near revolt's abruptest brink.
And when her dark old friend had turned to go,
She, too, rose up. Then cried her master, "No."

103

"I have a word with you, and you're to wait;
I must acquaint you with your proper station.
At Colonel Maury's, I right here may state,
You had your own way; but on this plantation
I rule, and every nigger must walk straight
Or I will bring him to the situation.
But, at the same time, you need have no fear,
If you will but obey me—do you hear?"

104

“I don’t indulge my niggers—never do;
I tell them what to do, and they must do it.
I feed them, clothe them, and I work them, too;
And if they disobey me, they must rue it.
But I shall have no need to chastise you;
Even to scold a pretty girl like you,
'Twould be a shame, much more to have to strike you!
I’ll tell you what, e’en now I really like you.”

105

“I did n’t buy you for a common field hand;
I don’t intend that you work out of doors;
But you’re to keep house for me—understand?
Be in my room here, make my bed—do chores,
And just obey me—be at my command.
And anything you want, it shall be yours;
And if you’ll be good tempered you will find,
That Chester Royall can be all that’s kind.”

106

“Now, Maury is my friend; and when he praised you,
I promised him that I would treat you right—
That is, would show the care that’s always due
A girl who is obedient and polite.
He told me that his wife had strictly raised you,
And that you always had been very bright;
And I am glad that you have had good raising;
For that, of all things, most deserves our praising.”

107

“A man could love a girl like you; in fact,
I wouldn’t hardly be ashamed to have
It said that I like you.” And in the act
Of patting now the fair cheek of his slave,
He moved, but she avoided him with tact
As sweetly proper as ’twas truly brave;
And faced him straight, when he, half smiling, said:
“Tut, tut, you silly thing; are you afraid?”

108

She frowned. He was amazed—he could not speak.
A storm was brewing in his baffled mind;
The blood-like liquid flame rushed to his cheek,
And clouds of gath'ring wrath had made him blind.
He seized her hand and pressed, but he was weak,
And in his desperation would be kind;
And so he paused and hesitating stood;
But, at the bottom, fury filled his blood.

109

But words were lost, now aimed at Lena's ear;
Her master coaxed—she drew her hand away.
She heard him talking, yet she did not hear;
Her soul was loathing all he had to say.
The object of his craven heart was clear;
And, though she was his slave, she spurned him—yea!
She turned upon her heel as if to go;
But, with a husky growl, he muttered, “No.”

IIO

Then Lena threw the shutters wide to look;
 A moon, full-orbed, was rolling in mid-sky.
And with its dulcet tones a pebbly brook
 Said strange, weird things as it meandered by.
A dark magnolia, near her leaning, shook
 Its list'ning head, and night winds seemed to sigh,
As if they knew that someone was distressed.
Then Lena felt an arm around her pressed.

III

She wheeled, then sprang, and threw the arm from her;
 And from her splendid shoulders tossed her hair.
She turned upon him, pointing, spoke out: "Sir,
 Begone from me." Superb in her despair,
She stood so firmly that he feared to stir.
 But now she reeled—she sank upon a chair—
And with her hands upon her downcast eyes,
With greatest effort she restrained her cries.

112

The "Major " moved to lift her from her seat;
She felt his touch that half an appeal meant;
She threw his hands off, bounded to her feet,
And through the doorway like an arrow went.
Ah! then her master's wrath was at "white heat."
To her receding ears this threat he sent:
"I'll make you know!" and followed where she flew,
Declaring in his rage what he would do.

113

But on she went—on to the cabin sped.
The aged inmates met her at the door;
She brushed them by. "Good Lawd!" the old man said,
And followed her across the creaking floor
To where she threw herself upon a bed;
When his old spouse began to thus deplore:
"I knowed it, Andy, I'se don' tole you so;
Ole Massa's drunk—ef dat aint like him—sho!"

114

There Lena rested but a breathing spell;
 Upon her closely came pursuing fate;
Her master's footsteps on the threshold fell,
 And in his speech she heard hoarse anger grate.
The beast would seize his prey—she knew it well;
 The instant was supreme—she must not wait—
She rose, she sprang, she faced him as before;
Threw him aside and darted from the door.

115

On, on she ran,—out in the night alone;
 With broken accents of a hasty prayer;
A sob, a sigh, and then a bitter moan,
 She uttered on the night's lamenting air.
But on, still on she went through fields unknown
 To her, through woods and lanes, not caring where.
To flee brought her relief, for as she flew
The friendly darkness hid her form from view.

116

In her distress there was a constant flow
Of courage to the heart that else would break.
The darkling objects round her seemed to know,
And whisper something for a poor girl's sake.
Beset with dangers, thus compelled to go,
She knew not where, she dared all undertake.
No forms of ill that she might thenceforth find,
Could ever equal those she left behind.

117

She looked above, and upward soared her thought;
Through star-sown fields to myriad gates of light.
She looked before, and silent forms were wrought
By pine and hemlock on the walls of night.
Their very stillness was with meaning fraught,
Mute witnesses they seemed of her sad plight.
But on she went, determined as a tide;
Nothing could daunt her; naught could turn aside.

118

“Here, Missy! dis way, Missy! come along.”

The speaker was old Andy, Lena’s friend,
Who, like an apparition, there among

The shadows rose. At first fright served to lend
Wings to her speed; but, like a thrush’s song,

The old man’s words did with such coaxing blend,
That Lena’s heart beat free—her fears were gone—
She grasped the offered hand and hurried on.

119

On, under hemlocks and magnolias dark,

They turned their flight which way a stream was brawl-
Across the fields they heard a watch-dog’s bark [ing.

Betray their whispers on his quick ears falling.
And so, they durst not breathe a least remark

Till where the great trees rose, their vision walling,
They reached the stream, and, finding a canoe,
Were quickly gliding where dark willows grew.

120

Dark rolled the stream beneath great live-oak boughs,
 With mosses hung like some old hermit's hair.
And here and there the dipping oar would rouse
 A night bird up, to pierce the startled air
With its strange cry. Again the shores would drowse;
 But coaxing words revealed the old slave's care
For Lena, while he bravely pulled the oar,
Till he had landed on a chosen shore.

121

“Here we must stop.” He breathed, and opening wide
 His patient eyes with satisfaction clear,
He stepped ashore with Lena at his side.
 They paused,—the old man turned a list'ning ear,
While his dark features Lena closely eyed.
 There was no sound of any danger near.
“He thinks I've come to find and bring you back!”
Said Lena's guide, “but he's clean off de track.”

122

“I seed you when you flew on up the lane,
Jes’ like er sperrit, and I kept in sight,
And so I said: ‘Ole Massa’ll not obtain
Ter seein’ dat poah gal agin to-night.’”
But here the old man turned his face again;
And, grasping Lena’s hand, pursued his flight;
Till in the shadow of a mighty wood,
Beneath a monarch tree they listening stood.

123

But they must part. Beneath the monarch tree,
With mosses hanging like a hermit’s hair,
They listened till the old slave said: “Now we
Must separate. I leave you in God’s care.”
And as the meek-faced dawn one now could see
Peep from the curtained east, to full and fair
Soon open into day, you might have spied
The old slave bowed, and Lena at his side.

124

And as they parted, in that dark old face,
Which had been thus upturned to Heaven in prayer,
There shone a light of satisfying grace,
That softened every furrow made by care.
But, day was breaking,—he must leave the place;
And Lena thence alone her way must fare.
“God bress de chile!”—the parting words were said:
The one turned back, the other onward sped.

125

And as old Andy went, could you have seen
Him homeward through the woods at sunrise going,
You must have felt that angels,—which have been,
According to the scriptures, busy doing
Errands of mercy, Heav’n and earth between,
And schemes of evil-doers overthrowing,
Have not all quit, are not all of them white—
Triumphant goodness winged the old man’s flight.

126

And looking up devoutly as he went—

(So the Apostles gazed from Judah's hill,
Whence their Redeemer had made His ascent
To Heaven)—he prayed: “De Lawd be with her still!”
To him it all divine occurrence meant.

And so, with secret joy, he ran on, till
He reached his cabin and his master met,
Who shouted: “Andy, have n't you found her yet?”

127

The old man grinned and bowed low with a groan,
Which told the fruitlessness of his pursuit
And his deep chagrin in a single tone—
Which meant: “My greatest efforts bore no fruit!”
He said: “I dunno whar she iz. I'se done!”

And then he shook his head and stood as mute
As death and looked to see his master rave.
Ah! Who could read the thoughts of that old slave?

128

Much I could here relate of what took place,
Of how dark clouds hung o'er the situation;
How "Major" Royall flew into the face
Of everybody on his big plantation;
Of how he "cursed and swore" that he "would chase
That 'Lady' to the end of all creation."
But we must hasten onward, while we may,
And overtake the blue-eyed runaway.

129

She waited not; her only hope was plain—
A speedy flight. So she was quickly gone
Through forests dark—left all roads, in the main—
O'er shrub-crowned hills, and through the gorges lone.
She knew not where, but held her heart of pain,
And went, though not a ray of promise shone.
But fleeing was relief, and as she went
O'er her the roughest trees in mercy bent,

130

Earth hath one spot on which none may intrude,
And not invite the certain frowns of Heaven;
There loving hearts with light divine imbued,
Clasp erring ones, and there are sins forgiven.
That spot is home, however poor and rude—
The holiest shrine at which one may be shriven—
And Lena came upon this sacred spot,
Where Maury erst found shelter in a cot.

131

She entered, sore and wan—she could not speak.
The housewife took her hand and said: “How do?”
Long hours of ceaseless flight had made her weak;
And in her eyes the mists now dimmed the blue.
She sadly smiled, she bowed divinely meek;
And followed where her hostess tiptoed through
An inner doorway till she reached a bed,
Where Lena sank to rest her drooping head.

132

The woman knelt; her features were divine;
 Clasped Lena's hands, though not a word she spoke.
Her kind eyes welcomed every feeble sign
 Of strength that in the poor girl's cheeks awoke.
She looked on Lena with a face benign;
 Caressed her pale brow with a tender stroke,
And softly whispered words of cheer, as she—
Lena—sank back and gasped: "I'll soon be free!"

133

The cotters of the mountain hurried in—
 All gazed, but no one knew the stranger's face;
Good women whispered how they saw that sin
 Had in her pretty features made no trace.
Her eyes still showed how trustful they had been,
 And in her cheek still blushed a rose of grace.
So words of comfort each one gently gave,
While bending kindly o'er the virgin slave.

134

There at her feet an old man kneeling prayed,
Till resignation lit her restful eyes,
As sunlight fills a still lake in the shade
That on the surface softly trembling lies,
Then settles till the depths are peaceful made.
Her cheeks were pale, but as when daylight dies
Out in the sky, it leaves a lingering glow,
So in her cheeks the dying flame was slow.

135

But now the stillness of this touching scene
Was broken by the sounds of flying feet.
Young Maury had arrived, who late had been
Urging his foam-flecked steed through dust and heat;
O'er barren hills and through the valleys green;
Till here directed to this wild retreat,
Where he at night had once been tempest bound,
The tender object of his search he found.

136

He knew the wife, who quickly did admit:

Then Lena's soul, that had already heard
The summons that would bid her spirit flit,
The moment of departure now deferred;
And while a glow of recognition lit

Her sad blue eyes, she rose, she gasped a word;
And as young Maury hastened to her side,
She clasped his hand, then sank back satisfied.

137

Triumphant Resignation on her brow

Still sat enthroned, and made Death's harvest mown
A golden joy. To those who watched her now
The Reaper's pathway was with flowers strown.
The golden grain indeed was lying low,

But in the stubble precious blooms had grown;
So there we leave young Maury with his dead;
Nor ask we further, what was done or said.

133

Here ends the act. We let the curtain fall;
Tread softly now where sleeps the blue-eyed maid.
We've seen the play, and running through it all,
The thread of pathos which it must be said
Is true to life. This earth was far too small
For such a soul. But Maury, having made
Arrangements home her body to convey,
With grief too deep for tears bore her away.

139

The day of reckoning came. With bearing fine
O'er Lena's corpse stood Sheldon, now of age,
And to his father said: "Give me what's mine,
And I'll get out, and for myself engage
In business; but I'll never beg nor whine,
If I go empty handed. At no stage
In Life's uncertain game will I return;
I ask of Fortune naught but what I earn!"

140

“To Lena I’ve been partial. I have been
No master merely, but I’ve been her friend.
God is my judge, I’ve known her not in sin,
And I’m proud of her; proud that to the end
I’ve dared to stand, with all the power within
My heart and arm, her honor to defend.
For her, my faithful playmate, pretty slave,
My love and friendship shall survive the grave!”

141

“In childhood once I saw a mouser spring
Upon a poor canary in its cage.
I heard its tiny plea, saw desperate wing
Resist in vain the monster’s cruel rage;
And I were guilty of a meaner thing,
Had harm befallen Lena’s tender age—
And she my slave, I should, to say the least,
Now own myself a wretch—a human beast!”

142

His father answered: "Son, you are a Maury;
We've suffered no dishonor at your hands.
I have not understood you, and I'm sorry;
Hence, I shall not now yield to your demands.
You're brave and true, now don't be in a hurry;
For there are other days, and he who stands
At parting of the ways, should calmly wait
Till Wisdom makes the path of duty straight "

143

"Before his eyes; and then he should proceed
With careful steps, reflecting as he goes,
Should coolly keep his judgment in the lead;
For streams fret most where rocks and shoals oppose,
And headstrong currents into danger speed.
No man is safe until he fully knows
That anger is an outlaw, and must be
Held in strong chains and bars perpetually."

144

“Fortune, superior talents, circumstance,
Are all mere drift, upon a dizzy tide,
That whirl and bob in an unmeaning dance,
Yea, valor, breeding, and lineal pride,
Are all mere puppets, strung by aimless chance,
Unless man’s sober judgment be his guide.
So here upon the strange mysterious brink
Which men call Death, my son, let’s pause and think.”

145

The mother smiled and gravely shook her head.
She knew her splendid boy—she knew his will.
And then with woman, love is never dead:
Love’s treasured flowers survive the frosts which kill.
The past, to her, lies like a landscape spread,
Whose mellowed light beams but more charming still.
And though the years may change the gold to gray,
Still woman’s heart’s as young and warm as May.

146

And on that day no funeral bell was ringing,
 But sloping in the sun, you saw the hills,
And pansied meadows where the larks were singing
 Such medleys, heart-bursts, and such glorious trills—
It seemed that they from some high clime were bringing
 New rend'rings of the theme of joy which thrills
All Nature, when the cortege slowly wound
Across the old farm to the burying ground.

147

The sinking sun across the western gap,
 Had tarried to put up his golden bars;
And darkness took the valley on her lap,
 And waited for the coming of the stars.
And mountain heights had now begun to wrap
 Themselves in that repose which nothing mars;
That sense of resignation, which implies
A faith that finds foundation in the skies.

148

No useless drappings of a funeral

Like shadows hung round Lena's resting place;
There was no mourning—no loud grief, nor pall—

But tender glories of day's ending race,
Did o'er earth like celestial curtains fall;

And Heav'n was lovely as a maiden's face;
While humble negroes sang a low refrain—
A burst of hope, with undertones of pain.

149

No priest was there to formal prayers recite;

To intonate his creeds with measured breath;
Nor aim with outreach of an earthly rite,

To put ajar the baffling gates of death
And grasp the mysteries of the Infinite;

But Faith, there whispered the sweet shibboleth
"At Rest," while Love clasped Hope and looked before,
To joy-crowned summits of the evermore.

150

What if there be no dim cathedral's aisle?

What if no deep-toned organ e'er be heard?

The soul can see its God in Nature smile,

And praise is loudest when we speak no word.

What if no sounding dome surmount the pile,

Which wealth to mock the humble poor hath reared?

Hope still sees temples in the golden mist,

With gates of light and spires of amethyst.

151

Yea, "nor shall altars reared of wood and stone

Appear," said Jesus, "only on yon height;"

"Nor shall there to Jerusalem alone

Go worshipers; but such as in the light

Of truth and spirit, seek God, shall he own."

God sees man's heart, nor heeds his formal rite.

When day upon the flaming hills expires,

What need hath earth for man's poor altar fires!

152

My temple is the sky—my High-Priest God;
 “ My hope and my salvation the Most High,”
Whose altar is the sun and whose ephod
 Is infinite Night’s stellar harmony!
With Him, mind walks till now, as Enoch trod,
 And still He talks in smoking Mount Sinai.
Yea, in the everlasting rocks we read
His law still written—His eternal creed.

153

Mind knows no death. Life is the “ first and last.”
 The falling leaf leaves its source living still;
The flower which withers in the autumn blast
 Dies not, but thus escapes the winter’s chill,
And will return, through changes strange and vast,
 When summoned forth to range o’er vale and hill.
Shall mind which thus perceives Life’s changes die?
Hath only matter immortality?

154

Mind knows no death beyond a prolonged sleep,—
Suspended action—rest by Heaven designed.
The grave, the rest for all who toil and weep,
Could ne'er have been intended for the mind.
Then who shall dread to cross the rayless deep,
And reach the vast unknown, with joy to find
Existences here dimly understood—
Too fine to be perceived by "flesh and blood?"

155

And "if one sleep, he doeth well," 'twas said;
Yea, for unreckoned will the ages be
That swing their long flight o'er the sleeper's head;
A day—a thousand years—eternity,
The same—no thought of time can e'er disturb the dead;
And when one shall have waked, new worlds to see,
He will have found, with joy and sweet relief,
That time unreckoned makes the cycles brief.

156

But, "if a man die, shall he live again?"

 This baffling question comes from long ago.

Shall ashes only of Life's torch remain?

 The mind cries out, and Nature answers, "No!"

Ye who have heard the prophesying rain,

 And seen the flowery Resurrection glow:

Ye know of better things than eye hath seen;

Ye know sere Earth is Mother of the green.

157

The wild moose shivers in the north land's breath,

 Where Huron's wave upbraids the fretful shore;

The marsh fowl far to southward wandereth

 And calls her tribes to milder climes explore;

All Nature seems to sigh: "Remember death,

 For all the living soon shall be no more." "

But mark how Faith sweeps on with tireless wing,

To find for e'en the fowl an endless spring.

.

158

Oh! Now my soul hath found the mystic strand,
Where life and death meet like the shore and sea;
The ebb and flow—the ever-shifting sand,
Are doubts and fears which oft encompass me;
But if I pause and let Faith take my hand,
Peace fills the darkest waves of mystery;
And I can hear it in the fathoms said:
“Lo! I am with thee! Be thou not afraid.”

159

Let scoffers mock, let unbelief deny—
Agnosticism stolidly ignore;
Let worldly wisdom proudly ask us, “Why?”
And still the soul cries out for something more—
For something better than philosophy—
Still longs for higher joys and looks before;
And cannot rest—will ne’er contented be,
Till triumph over matter leaves mind free.

160

Then hail we all the spirits of the just,
 With Lena we shall join them all. The mind
Now risen looks down on Life's unmeaning dust,
 And soars to higher spheres—all unconfined;
To spheres of love and duty, hope and trust;
 And leaves the sordid and corrupt behind.
The Virgin is the sign of vanquished night,
Her child is born—born of the soul—the Light.

161

Farewell! In grandeur sinks the closing day,
 And on our vision slowly fades the light;
And bygone scenes, like shadows fall away,
 To settle in the blank of coming night.
The Octoroon has passed, but not for aye;
 To those who have the gift of inner sight,
The spirit of all nature prophesies
A home for love and beauty in the skies.

PART II.

THE SOUTHLAND'S CHARMS

AND

FREEDOM'S MAGNITUDE

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THE SOUTHLAND'S CHARMS AND FREEDOM'S MAGNITUDE

STANZA I.

Far in a vale among the mountains blue,
Close by a stream where roving cattle stray,
Where grand old sylvans darkly crowd the view,
And towering summits brush the clouds away;
Down where the waters, wildly rushing through
The rocks, enchant the scene with song and spray,
There round my childhood home, a cabin rude,
Wild Nature taught me Freedom's magnitude.

2

There I have stood upon the precipice
That hovered awful space, and heard the leap
Of waters downward with a fearful hiss,
To thence rush onward in their angry sweep,
Like fiends contending in the fierce abyss;
And musing there in meditation deep,
I learned to reverence the Almighty Force,
Which rends the hills and shapes the water-course.

3

And there I've mused among the wood-haunts deep.
When Silence told her secrets in my ear;
When Echo startled from her midday sleep,
Would flee and mock, and flee and—disappear.
I've heard the harp-strings of the wild breeze give
Such music sweet as only poets hear;
While floods of bird-song filled the vibrant boughs
With meanings which no vulgar soul allows.

4

Here I have heard the all-consoling speech
Of mystery which fills the solitudes,
When leaves with velvet pleadings do beseech
The pensive winds to linger in the woods;
And here I've found the depths beyond my reach—
The depths of feeling o'er which Silence broods—
And out upon which, as upon a sea,
The Soul would venture to meet Deity.

5

Dear land of many a classic wood and stream,
The proud birthright of ancient families,
With mountains whose blue robes have been my dream,
In glorious compass ranged 'neath charming skies;
Thou art a fit retreat, I fondly deem,
For those romantic loves which brave men prize,
Which clothed a wigwam with historic grace,
And charmed the cabins of an injured race.

6

Hail, Native land! first-born of Freedom, hail!

Maintain the foremost rank of pow'r and pride!
Thy far-ranged mountains rich with wooded vale,
And classic waters rolled in crystal tide,
Adjure thee loftily now to prevail.

Oh! Let thy sons in New World light decide
To plant for aye on Freedom's glorious heights
The standard of triumphant equal rights.

7

Here Meditation found a leafy shrine,

And one could hear the thoughts of Diety
Breathed on the winds; here oracles divine
Unrolled the secrets of green mystery.

And as the waters of a fair lake shine

Beneath the sun, rippling delightfully;
So floods of thought here waved before the soul,
In visions bright, to ripple, dance, and roll.

8

Here Beauty spread her rich and varied store
Of woods which, blent with strength of hills sublime,
Have made the virgin forests to explore,
The lasting charm of every age and clime.
'Twas no wild scene where aimless chance reigned o'er
The dateless lapses of unreckoned Time ;
But human skill had lent enough of aid
To vie with Nature's crowning art displayed.

9

A road beyond, and modest gateway led
Through wildering vistas to a dark recess,
Where interlaced with light the boughs o'er head
Like curtains hung, in wastes of loveliness.
And still beyond the farther landscape spread
Its ample fields in rich and varied dress,
Golden and green, in waving harmonies;
Wooring and wooed by Dixie's charming skies.

IO

Oh, direful day that saw Rebellion's guns
On valiant Sumter opening from the land ;
That saw white-handed Chivalry's proud sons
Their country's standard trail with impious hand ;
Saw erring Carolina's ablest ones
Invoke red war on their palmetto strand ;
And, in their frenzy, send the challenge forth
That roused the legions of the loyal North.

II

The stars and stripes that in our standard fly,
Immortal symbols of the nation's might,
The splendor of night's orb-emblazoned sky,
The blue of day's eternal depths—the white
Of Heaven's peace and spotless purity,
And red of morn's defiance-streaming light,
Meant nothing which that madcap State would heed,
Which vowed to spread vile slavery or secede.

12

Time shall set right the wrongs which man has done,
And Justice in unerring judgment reign;
Though world-wrecks pile round an extinguished sun;
And star-dust swirl in ruin's lurid train!
The sins of man unchastened shall not run,
Despite the earth's best valor, wealth, and brain;
Behold, God's angel came in war's dread form,
With all the fury of a tropic storm!

13

I stood where the contending armies bled—
A hundred thousand men on either side.
The past returned. Around me rose the dead,
The brazen bugles rang out far and wide;
The clouds of thund'rous battle round me spread
O'er lurid fields, where mighty chiefs did ride,
And ranks of serried steel swung into sight,
Flashing afar—an army in its might.

14

And there was silence in the pulsing air,
While in the noon sun fluttered banners gay—
A lull that breathed the courage of despair;
A hush which meant a pause in which to pray,
There youths whose lives had never known a care
Confronted veterans with locks of aged gray;
Before the cool glare of the veteran,
The blue-eyed youth stood dauntless, man to man.

15

O'er green fields, each upon his chosen steed,
The grouped commanders watched the lines swing by—
But those grim heroes had no thought to heed
The landscape's beauty waving on the eye.
Ah, loveliness availeth naught indeed,
When Saxon valor hears the battle-cry!
And mountains rising in cerulean skies,
Can then no more avert the warrior's eyes.

16

With sunny spirit and with knightly dash,
The brave young legions rode up from the South,
And loyal hosts as brave, if not so rash,
Stood to receive them at the cannon's mouth.
All nerves were steeled to wait the thunder-crash
Of opening battle. Sire and beardless youth,
Earth's ties forgetting, raised the battle's yell
And charged right through the storm of shot and shell.

17

Wide o'er the field as far as eye could see,
The waves of angry steel came surging on.
Ten thousand chosen sons of chivalry,
Late bivouaced at the tomb of Washington,
But now sent forward by the high-souled Lee,
And led by Pickett, Valor's proudest son,
Came sweeping in a hurricane of flame
Death-girdled, up the glorious heights of fame!

18

Ah, what a splendid show of valor there!

Lee's fearless cordons in the vale of death,
With Pickett mute and glorious in despair,
Unflinching in the battle's with'ring breath.

All hail to Pickett, gentle, brave and fair;

No prouder sword than his e'er leapt from sheath.
And who would not uncovered bow the head,
Where fell the young and gallant Armistead?

19

Oh, when shall History's muse e'er fitly write

The charge of Pickett's ragged legions grand,
That faced the guns of Cemetery height?

What muse shall ever, with inspired hand,
Sing how the great North, in her loyal might,
Hurled back invading Slavery from her land;

And from her freedom-tented summits saw
Secession's broken strength reel backward and withdraw?

20

'Tis Lee's retreat; all hail his columns brave.

With colors full and fair they march abreast;
Rolled back like a tremendous ocean wave,

Their strength unbroken, though so sore distressed.
Oh, are not soldiers who can thus behave,

Well worthy of a more sublime behest?
Proud in defeat, superb in battle line;
Base though their cause their valor is divine!

21

Hail! Fair-souled Lee, the last and mightiest

Of Southland sons to reach Fame's zenith height;
He sheds a crowning glory on the rest

Who with him faced the great North in her might.
The stainless Bayard of the South, the best,

The first and brilliantest of all the bright
Enduring stars that did the North's hosts meet,
He shone with purest lustre in defeat.

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22

And when he to the man of gentle heart—
The one Field Marshal of the Western world,
His opposite, and yet his counterpart,
Illustrious Grant, whose standard ne'er was furled
In known defeat, who "moved on" from the start
And hurled his legions as a Cæsar hurled—
When Lee surrendered to his Northern peer,
War's fortunes rounded a complete career.

23

One Grant—and there can be no more ; one Lee,
And war's exhausted glories have an end ;
One people, white and black, thenceforward free ;
One glorious flag for heroes to defend ;
And one proud task ours thence shall ever be :
To trace the path for all lands in the trend
Of New World progress, and to thence make way
For Freedom throughout all the world for aye!

24

And hail we all. The men who followed Lee
Were brave, but best of all—AMERICAN.
So, let them heirs of glory ever be,
With those who followed Grant and Sheridan.
And that the sable bondman now is free,
And battle-tried; hail him, too, fellow man.
No gentler nature ever warmed a breast;
And he in valor's equal to the best.

25

Let stars of rank for all our heroes shine;
A valiant land should hail them all with pride.
Where deeds of valor thrilled the shell-raked line,
The Negro stood with Saxon side by side,
And face to face. Yea, where it was divine
To die for country, there the Negro died.
So let there be an end forever hence
To that race-hate which sickens common sense.

26

The war is ended; like receding waves,
 Its force subsiding leaves a peaceful shore.
Hushed is the singing of the mournful slaves;
 And in our sunny walks we meet no more
These patient sufferers—sights which no one craves.
 And now, hope-beaming Hesperus leads o'er
A wide horizon our new world-empire,
With still new regions opening on our eyes.

27

Roll on! Historic James, thy classic song
 Shall ever thrill the proud hearts of the free;
For, 'mid the virgin woods thy shores along,
 Our patriot-sires first heard the lullaby
Of Freedom, and from Henry's fiery tongue
 First caught the watch-cry: "Give me liberty,
Or give me death!"—when startled Europe heard
That forest Tribune challenge George the Third.

28

Roll! Shenandoah, thine eternal song
Roll onward to the all-forgetting sea,
And bear away the Southland's darkest wrong.
Oh, storied stream, may it forever be
That Plenty's hosts in peace thy shores shall throng,
And celebrate the triumphs of the free;
While Grant and Lee, illustrious peers, stand forth
Exemplar-Saxons of the South and North.

29

Thy wont is on the foremost front to lead,
On the audacious verge thy wont to stay;
My native land!—The voice of Progress heed!
Arise! and call thy sons to lead the way.
Thy sister nations have in might decreed
To forge ahead and leave thee if they may;
But thy past glories are a heritage,
Commanding that thou still must lead thy age.

30

Oh! how I've loved our old South solitudes!

Where classic waters mused in listless rhyme,
And warbling gladness filled the stately woods!

But now I long to see this matchless clime
Adjust its life to the vicissitudes

Of sane endeavor;—long to see the time
When we shall learn that toil excels our dreams,
That mills make better music than the streams!

31

Two Saxon worlds clasp hands—the Old and New;

And now their coming great alliance throws
Its shadow, in which tyrants, quaking, view

Their thrones unsafe, and Freedom's combined foes
Stand trembling, while world-vast emprises brew,

And Saxon unity takes root and grows;
This unity, world-power and world-emprise,
The eagle and the lion symbolize.

32

Yea, where the mountains of the future rise
And opportunity finds glorious scope,
Wealth points the way for lofty enterprise
And labor views the beacon-star of Hope!
Industry's morn is blazing in the skies,
And Freedom calls her sons no more to grope,
But in the mastery of Brotherhood,
To scale the heights of greatest human good.

33

From time when Morn to strew Atlantic sands
With liquid pearls, trips from her amber gates,
Till Evening holds a rainbow in her hands,
And at the doorway of the Rockies waits;
From North Lakes far, and from the harvest lands
Of the Dakotas to the Sunny States;
From woods and fields, from rivers and vast mines,
Now Freedom calls us to cast off the lines

34

And sail forth with the ship and breast the sea.

On all our hills with banners of green corn,
The bugling air calls out to rouse the free.

In all our vales love's busy hands adorn
The homes that are the goal of Liberty;

And robust plenty winds his jocund horn
For pleasure's throngs to meet him in the shade,
Where songful boughs have his pavilions made.

35

Free labor still our country's hope remains,—

In this our largest manhood shall be grown;
The spirit of vast woods and vaster plains,—

Canyons and geysers of the Yellowstone;
Alaskan summits, where bald winter reigns,

And rests on base of gold his icy throne,—
These all are prophecies of what shall be,
When Freedom's sons shall leave their brothers free.

36

Then we shall heed no more the dreamer's lute,
 But join the thunderous march of industry;
The mountain gorge shall be no longer mute,
 But toil shall start the haunts of Revery;
And from vast mines down many a headlong chute,
 The burdened car in iron harness fly,
Filling the ancient seats of Solitude
With throb and thrill of Labor's Masterhood.

37

Our Heav'n-blest land will thenceforth be the great;
 The Blue Ridge Mountains, those fair infant heights,
The charm and glory of a proud old State,
 Will then have comprehended human rights;
And to the past, the obsolete, relate—
 To moonlight trystings, dreams and starry nights—
No longer, but to high imperial dower,
Broad civilization: wealth, expansion, power.

38

Here roll our streams with freedom in the wave,
And birdsong tunes the freedom of the air;
Here manhood fills the goblet of the brave,
And Beauty's cheeks with ruddy life are fair.
Here larger spheres of life lead one to crave
No boon which all his fellows may not share;
And one looks forward to a grander day
For mankind, opening in true Freedom's sway.

39

But lingering still, the light of olden days
Falls softly on the slopes of mem'ry yet;
And I am looking through the gentle haze
On scenes gone by, which I can ne'er forget.
And though in our New World's imposing phase
The great ambitions round me chafe and fret,
Still turning to the quiet past I find
Old scenes surviving which delight the mind.

40

Oh, happy days when wealth strove to create
Those homely joys which man now little knows;
When hounds and horns found patrons in the great,
And stirred to lofty emulation those
Who held the foremost rank in Church and State,
Who highest in profound achievements rose;
When Beauty even threw her loving heart
Into the chase and took a brilliant part.

41

A slender-waisted Venus of the chase,
For whom one's admiration knew no bounds;
A tall athletic paragon of grace,
She sat her gallant steed and rode to hounds.
The blood of heroes glowing in her face,
Through clam'rous woods and over open grounds;
The horn blast sending thrills through all her veins
She swept before and held the fearless reins.

42

Oh! that the golden light of olden days,
In all but slavery, might return once more!
Oh! for the fearless manhood which essays
To champion all the virtues of the poor,
Which scorns to imitate the vulgar ways
Of upstart fortune. How one must deplore
The painful symptoms of decaying taste,
When chivalry is dead or run to waste.

43

I know familiar faces on the walls
Of time may look down from the long ago,
On which the light too strong at present falls,
Revealing what we should not care to know.
But still the lessons which a look recalls,
Through golden mists of time will softly glow;
And what were painful else, 'tis ever true,
Will, down the vistas, form a pleasing view.

44

Oh, for a harp to wake and fitly sing
The homely pleasures which I used to know—
That some sweet spirit of the past might bring
To me the forms I've loved in years ago;
For mem'ry's light doth still around me fling
Their images as hearth-fires shadows throw.
And thus I linger as we pass along
With just a note of sadness in my song.

45

Thus I can hear the slave-songs homeward turning,—
Those Soul-felt lays that left no trace of care,
But somehow told us that the heart was yearning
For better worlds, where man to man is fair.
And candles through the whispering twilight burning,
Still shed their gleams of welcome on the air;
And I can feel with nameless throb and thrill,
The big round world beginning to be still.

46

Now there's a lull;—earth's great heart resting beats,
And in the drowsy leaves just out of reach,
A tree-frog prophesying rain, entreats
Dull night to hear; while with contentious speech
Her old dispute the katydid repeats;
A night owl yonder starts her witch-like screech,
And in the brindled shadow of the hill,
Behind the corn field, hark!—a whippoorwill.

47

And I can see forms round the Summer fire
Content with earth's scant bounties for the poor;
Can hear gay talk and laughter rising higher;
And see my "old black mammy" in the door.
Can hear the tune: "Virginny nebber tire,"
See Pickanninies dancing on the floor;
Till song breaks out and blossoms on the air,
And mirth has put to flight the heels of Care.

48

There never was a Delphian priestess' song,
Nor hymn of gods, nor laureled victor's lay,
To move my heart like sounds when I was young—
Those sounds of rest which closed the happy day.
No oracle could ever have a tongue
That in my ears such mystic hints could say,
As I have heard by whisp'ring maples said,
When in the dusk a slave his banjo played.

49

Grand though the strides of New World enterprise,
Though with success our vast industries hum,
The proud old South must still turn her blue eyes
On scenes gone by until at times there come
The mists of sadness in them. Sunny skies,
And landscapes that are the perennial sum
Of flow'r and fruit, are not for her complete,
While one is absent whom no more she'll meet.

50

Her proud old Negro of religious mind,
The ebon patriarch of sunny eld,
The personage most noted of his kind,
The one in gentlest memory ever held,
In patient servitude no more she'll find.
His day is past. His children have rebelled,
Alas! repudiated slavery days,
And through the schools have learned the new-found ways.

51

And yet for him the South will ever mourn;
His virtues and his foibles will enshrine
In song and story. Like a lover lorn,
In beauty peerless and in faith divine,
And by her splendid valor well upborne;
In her proud heart, still, still the South will pine
For him who once her life such flavor gave—
The pompous, kindly, faithful, old-time slave!

52

He watched the cradle of white innocence,
 And feeble age's drooping head sustained;
Rejoiced when day without a cloud commenced,
 But, in the storm, unmurmuring still remained.
He loved his master; held his confidence,
 Esteem and love in turn, and honor gained.
His taste was e'er consulted and his tact
Employed—he was his master's lord, in fact.

53

But he is gone! His passing brings a sigh.
 And thou, Old South, superbly fine and fair!
Thou, old White Lady, of a reign gone by,
 With threads of silver in thy sunny hair,
And in thy gaze the blue of Summer sky,
 While breath of roses steals upon the air;
Thou, too, dost pass!—thy skirts of silken pride
Trail by, alas! through halls of mem'ry wide.

54

And there are voices in the golden gloom,
Where in the shadows forms of loved ones meet.
The air is prodigal of rich perfume—
The breath of shrubs and honeysuckles sweet,
While down the hall that leaves a vacant room,
I hear the brisk sounds of departing feet;
And I must pause, and say, ere fades the light:
Thou old White Lady of the past—good night!

55

But let them go! “Old Glory” waves on high.
The war is over, and the slaves are free.
The Blue Ridge Mountains look into the sky,
And peaks of Otter look into the sea.
Proud heights, from which, when Randolph rapturously
Beheld the Heav’ns with sunrise blushing, he
Declared that thence he must in God believe—
The Cause which mind must in such works perceive.

56

Farewell, alas! my native land adored!

I've sung thy praises in a faithful strain;
But westward life's imperial tides have poured,
Eddying in towns, and sweeping on again,
While braver hearts have in their strength ignored
The old South limitations which remain.

And I must leave the land which gave me birth,
Or pine, an alien, on my native hearth.

57

Hail! Morn upon the mountains! Orient queen!

Awakening Earth rejoices in thy reign!
A world of fruited hill and meadows green,
With waving seas of corn and bearded grain,
Far spread, invests with plenty's glorious sheen
The path of empire o'er the western plain;
And mind, enlarged by areas vast and heights
Sublime, perceives the scope of Human Rights.

58

Hail! Sovran Rockies! Sent'nels of the sun!

The course of empire, in the race sublime
Of world-endeavor, at the East begun,

With thee shall end; and from the gates of Time
Earth shall no more behold such races run!

Snow-mantled sea-guards! Bulwarks of our clime,
The standard of triumphant Equal Rights,
Forever fly from thy unconquered heights!

59

Peaks dipped in Heaven, and far-flung bounds of space;
Stupendous canyons, earthquake-riven and wrought,
That are the seams of age in Nature's face—

The wrinkles in which we may read God's thought;
And crags piled high—stairways on which we trace

God's footprints—these have all sublimely taught
That Freedom in her strongholds is secure;
That God shall reign and Human Rights endure.

60

Hail! Rockies, hail! fit for Jehovah's seat!
Mid thy pavilions of the curtained mist,
While the Pacific couches at thy feet,
Rise thou for aye the tyrant to resist!
Rise thou, till Freedom calls her sons to meet,
And, crowned with gold and robed in amethyst,
She welcomes all the earth to fill her train,
Join her triumphant march and share her reign.

61

Hail! Rockies, thunder-tongued, hold thou the watch
Of Freedom from thy parapets on high!
The footsteps of the rosy morning catch,
And hold the dying glories of the sky;
For in sublimity thou hast no match,
Thou threshold watchers of Eternity!
Rise in the way of Freedom's every foe—
Rise thou for aye, O Sovran of the snow!

.62

On thy dread summits which to Heav'n doth soar
I pause where thunders sleep, and, gazing through
The depths that lead beyond and evermore,
I rest till heights in grandeur piled imbue
The Soul with praises fitly to adore
The Awful One whose power alone could do
The works, O wondrous Rockies, thou didst see,
Ere trembling day came forth or man could be!

63

Here, crag-watched round, the Soul hath found a shrine,
And, in white robes, Thought walks with Deity!
Here lips of awe speak oracles divine
'Mid listening heights of immortality;
And Heav'ns eternal watch-lights here shall shine
High in the temple dome of Liberty,
While ages marshal in their silent flight,
Earth's millions in defense of Truth and Right.

64

I had a dream: Columbia the Great,
The Arbitress of Nations had prevailed.
From Europe trains crossed bridge-spanned Behrings's Strait
And ships through Panama from South Seas sailed.
Through atmospheric tubes the mail and freight
Skimmed hill and dale and loftiest mountains scaled;
Threading the richest cities, on they went,
And in a few hours crossed the continent.

65

I saw our fleets guarding a hundred seas,
All with unshotted guns ride proudly home;
I saw the hosts that watch our liberties
By land afar from bloodless conquest come.
And shouts of welcome then rose on the breeze,
With bells and whistles in uproarous hum;
And Peace's multitudes went singing, streaming
Through leagues of bunting, and of standards gleaming

66

And not a home, a mansion or a hut

 In all the land, but heard the call that day.

From plainsman's ranch and miner's cabin shut

 In forest depths and mountain far away,

The sons of Freedom came, and cities put

 Their millions forth to swell the concourse gay.

It was a jubilee of joy and tears:

Columbia had reigned a thousand years!

67

The Sphinx of Race Hate looked into the past,

 Unheeded as the cheering throngs went by

In thund'rous unison, a concourse vast,

 Proclaimed the triumphing of Liberty.

The walls of Wrong had gone down at the blast

 Of Truth's oncoming trumpets; Earth and Sky

Attesting the inexorable plan,

That all men shall arise in raising man.

68

And then I saw that Toil need not sweat blood;
 But be reduced to healthful exercise.
Yet mankind had sufficiency of food,
 That, barring avarice, all had full supplies
For mind and body. Then I understood—
 The State-fixed bounds for corporate Enterprise,
Adjusting all disputes 'twixt Capital
And Labor fairly—Law deciding all.

69

I saw the children cared for by the State,
 As well as by their parents—that, indeed,
The nation held first claim in all the great
 Concerns of health and training—man's first need.
I saw that man must rule and regulate
 His home by love, and never by a creed:
That health, intelligence, Morality,
Saved in the child, safeguarded Liberty.

70

And so, no children roamed the streets at will,
In hungry shoals to swarm the streams of Time;
But wise apprenticeships restrained them till
They had escaped the snares of early crime,
And reached safe heights of industry and skill;
And there was not allowed a wedding chime
When there was presence of a known disease,
Hence, no divorces, no adulteries.

71

I saw a city in the setting sun,
Superb and vast, that crowned a noble height;
It was the city of the Yellowstone.
In New World greatness, from its ancient site
Removed—the future's Washington.
And guarded round, in its unconquered might,
By leagues of fortress, was a populace
Unnumbered, drawn from ev'ry human race.

72

And then I stood within a stately hall;
 Ten thousand brilliant dancers thronged the floor;
'Twas at the Nation's great Inaugural,
 And there were guests from home and foreign shore—
Statesmen and epauleted warriors tall,
 Churchmen of note, and far-famed men of lore,
All in the sunny light of woman's love,
With airs of valor, like the gods, they move.

73

On swept the throngs, in eddies whirled and flowed
 Through flow'ry aisles and flag-hung corridors;
On, on, while Fortune's trophies flashed and glowed
 'Neath lamps that on the tessellated floors
Poured floods of light; and strangers proudly strode
 Among admiring groups—the guests of our fair shores—
While hid in labyrinths of shrubs and flowers,
Enchanting strains beguiled the fleeting hours.

74

There from the South I saw the blue-eyed blonde,
And from the North the Junoesque brunette;
From Hawaii the olive maiden fond,
The dainty Cuban with her eyes of jet—
And Octoroon whose beauty was beyond
Description, in a swirl of glory met,
Through mazy depths of flow'rs and lace to stream—
A symphony of lovely forms—My Dream.

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